

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR HAHM'S EFFORTS TO ALLAY EFFECT OF
CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR HAHM CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY SNEIDER JULY 22 UNDER INSTRUCTION TO SEEK TO
REDUCE IMPACT OF NIX/FRASER HEARINGS. HAHM SOUGHT ADVICE
ON MEANS TO ASSURE THAT ROKG POSITION RECEIVES FAIR HEARING.
SNEIDER ASSURED HIM OF DEPARTMENT SUPPORT, BUT REMINDED
THAT STAGING OF HEARINGS IS RESPONSIBILITY OF CONGRESS AND
ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS ONE ON WHICH MEMBERS HAVE DEEPLY
FELT VIEWS. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR HAHM PYONG CHOON, OBVIOUSLY UNDER INSTRUCTIONS
TO REDUCE IMPACT OF UPCOMING NIX/FRASER HEARINGS ON
HUMAN RIGHTS, CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SNEIDER
JULY 22, IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM SEOUL. HE WAS
MAINLY INTERESTED IN DETERMINING WHETHER IT WOULD BE
POSSIBLE TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENT SO THAT ROK GOVERNMENT
POSITION WOULD ALSO BE HEARD. HE INDICATED A SPECIFIC
INTEREST IN AVAILABILITY OF PROFESSOR DIXIE WALKER FROM
SOUTH CAROLINA AND ALSO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT
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CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDS OF KOREA WOULD PARTICIPATE.

2. IN COMMENTING ON SITUATION IN KOREA, HAM REPEATED CERTAIN THEMES HE HAS PUT FORWARD IN PAST. STRONG LEADERSHIP WAS REQUIRED IN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES, BUT INTELLECTUALS IN KOREA, WHO RESENT THE EMERGENCE OF A MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, FAIL TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SUCH LEADERSHIP AND DICTATORSHIP. PRESIDENT PARK IS CONCERNED BY DANGERS OF MASS DEMONSTRATIONS LEADING TO POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND NORTH KOREAN ATTACK. INTELLECTUAL OPPOSITION DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THAT BY PREVENTING WAR, PARK IS IN EFFECT TRYING TO SAVE KOREA AND IN THIS SENSE PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS. WITH RESPECT TO BISHOP CHI CASE, HAHM SAID KOREA IS NOT A CATHOLIC, LET ALONE A CHRISTIAN, COUNTRY, AND HE IMPLIED THAT CHI, WHO HAD BEEN DEALT WITH LENIENTLY IN THE PAST, WAS NOW MANIPULATING ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS. AS HE HAD IN THE BETH POND CASE, HAHM CLAIMED THE AMERICAN PRESS WAS NOT INTERESTED IN REPORTING GOVERNMENT'S SIDE AND IN THIS CONTEXT SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZED OBERDORFER FOR REPORTING THAT TORTURE HAD BEEN USED IN CURRENT COURT CASES. HAHM HAD RAISED THIS ISSUE RECENTLY WITH CIA HEAD SHIN, WHO CLAIMED HE HAD INVESTIGATED CHARGES AND FOUND THERE NOTHING TO SUCH ALLEGATIONS, THAT DEFENDANTS HAD "NOT EVEN BEEN SLAPPED".

3. HAHM WAS CONCERNED ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, AND DID NOT BELIEVE POSITION OF HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE GIVEN A FAIR HEARING. HE CLAIMED THAT IN HIS ABSENCE PARK KUN HAD ATTEMPTED TO ARRANGE A CALL ON CONGRESSMAN FRASER BUT HAD BEEN REFUSED AN APPOINTMENT (NIX HAD AGREED TO SEE HAHM, HOWEVER). HE ASKED DEPARTMENT'S HELP IN SEEING TO IT THAT HEARINGS WERE IMPARTIAL.

4. SNEIDER ASSURED HAHM THAT WE DESIRED ROKG POSITION BE GIVEN HEARING AND HE OFFERED TO TRY TO TALK TO CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS. STAGING OF HEARINGS, INCLUDING SELECTION OF WITNESSES, WAS RESPONSIBILITY OF CONGRESS, HOWEVER. TURNING TO ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, SNEIDER POINTED OUT THAT PRESSURES ARE BUILDING IN CONGRESS FOR FURTHER ACTION THIS YEAR IN AID BILL, WITH FOCUS ON KOREA, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY. CONFIDENTIAL

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CONGRESSIONAL REACTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ARE REFLECTED IN JACKSON-VANIK AMENDMENT REFLECTING DEEPLY FELT VIEWS IN U.S. ON THIS ISSUE. BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE ADMINISTRATION, WHOSE VIEWS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT IN ANNAPOLIS SPEECH AND REITERATED AGAIN BY DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL, RECOGNIZES THAT IT NOT POSSIBLE TO LEGISLATE HUMAN RIGHTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES. SPECIFICALLY, SO FAR AS

KOREA IS CONCERNED, SNEIDER SAID THAT JUDGMENTS AS TO
KOREAN INTERNAL POLICY ARE SOLELY RESPONSIBILITY OF ROKG.
SNEIDER REASSURED HAHM THAT USG SUPPORT FOR ASSISTANCE TO
KOREA REMAINS FIRM BUT WE FACE PROBLEM OF DEALING WITH
AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC REACTIONS. KISSINGER

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